



I am writing to **urge you to support House Bill 430**, *“The Police and Accountability Act.”* I want to thank Delegate Wilkins for the opportunity to write on the critical matter and content of HB 430 which ends qualified immunity.

There are three ways to hold the police accountable: criminally, administratively, and civilly. **Ending qualified immunity falls exclusively within the bucket of civil accountability.**

Police officers have a number of protections in place built into the constitution for split second decisions. What HB 430 does is give victims whose rights have been violated a civil cause of action, which currently, is stripped away from them because of qualified immunity.

**This bill guarantees that victims receive justice when their rights are violated**, and ensures that offices who violate someone’s rights in bad faith are held accountable. A person who is harmed, injured, or killed by the police can have their case spend years in court, only for it to be dismissed on the grounds of qualified immunity. **Victims and their families therefore receive no reparations or justice for the violation of their rights.**

This bill is common sense. It says to the people of Maryland that **everyone is held to the same standard under the constitution and the law**: that police officers are held accountable when they violate a citizen's rights, just like the rest of us are, and that victims receive their day in court.

I think about 13-year-old Savana Redding, who was illegally strip-searched by a police officer in her middle school building.

I think about Quamaine Mason and his family, who was killed after police shot him seven times and ordered a canine to attack whilst his hands were up.

Ending Qualified Immunity and passing HB 430 will shift the balance to a more level playing field. While law enforcement does not need the additional protection of qualified immunity, families seeking justice DO deserve their cases to be heard and it to be resolved in a timely fashion. Cases similar to Savana’s and Quamaine’s are dragged on for up to a decade, only to be thrown out solely on the basis of qualified immunity. **That will be no more if this is passed.** Victims like the 14 year old boy who was shot in the shoulder for holding a BB gun will be able to receive the justice they deserve.

Thank you all for your time and I look forward to supporting the work in Maryland for this crucial issue.